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Contract N00014-87-J-1118

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Technical Report No. 11

AD-A219 519

Modes of Attachment of Pyridine to Gold Surfaces

by

L. Stolberg, S. Morin, J. Lipkowski and D.E. Irish

Prepared for Presentation

at

The Spring Meeting, The Electrochemical Society, Montreal, May 6-11, 1990

Guelph-Waterloo Center for Graduate Work in Chemistry
Waterloo, Campus
Department of Chemistry
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario
Canada, N2L 3G1

March 8, 1990

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90 03 19 005

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS	
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY Unclassified			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Public Release/Unlimited	
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE				
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) ONR Technical Report #11			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION D. E. Irish University of Waterloo		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)		7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Office of Naval Research
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Department of Chemistry University of Waterloo Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, N2L 3G1			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) The Ohio State University, Research Center 1314 Kinnear Road, Room 318 Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., 43212-1194	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION Office of Naval Research		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)		9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER N00014-87-J-1118
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Chemistry Division 800 N. Quincy Street Arlington, VA, U.S.A., 22217-5000			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS	
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.
			TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) Modes of Attachment of Pyridine to Gold Surfaces				
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) L. Stolberg, S. Morin, J. Lipkowski and D.E. Irish				
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Technical		13b. TIME COVERED FROM 08/88 TO 03/90		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1990-03-08
15. PAGE COUNT 2				
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION The Spring Meeting, The Electrochemical Society, Montreal, May 6-11, 1990				
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)	
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	Pyridine adsorption; Au (100); Au (110); Au (111); polycrystalline; energetics; orientation	
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) — The adsorption of pyridine onto both polycrystalline and single crystal gold electrode surfaces has been investigated using three electrochemical techniques: cyclic voltammetry, differential capacity and chronocoulometry. The surface concentration of pyridine, the Gibbs energy of adsorption, the electrosorption valency and the orientation of the pyridine molecules on the gold electrode surfaces, have been measured. All of these parameters were found to be sensitive to the structure of the gold electrode surface.				
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Dr. Robert J. Nowak			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (519) 885-1211, ext. 2500	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL

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Modes of Attachment of Pyridine to Gold Surfaces

L. Stolberg¹, S. Morin¹, J. Lipkowski¹ and D.E. Irish²

Guelph-Waterloo Center for Graduate Work in Chemistry

¹Guelph Campus
University of Guelph
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Guelph, Ontario
Canada N1G 2W1

²Waterloo Campus
University of Waterloo
Department of Chemistry
Waterloo, Ontario
Canada N2L 3G1

Introduction

This work is part of a project which is devoted to studying the influence of crystallographic orientation of gold electrodes on the adsorption of pyridine from aqueous electrolyte solutions. We are trying to determine how the orientation of the adsorbed pyridine molecule and the energetics of its adsorption are governed by the geometry and density of coordination centres present at the electrode surface. Data are presented for the adsorption of pyridine onto polycrystalline gold, Au(100), Au(110) and Au(111).

Previously, Hamelin and Valette (1) investigated pyridine adsorption on gold single crystal electrode surfaces using differential capacity. These works have provided qualitative information on pyridine adsorption and have shown that there is a strong influence of the surface morphology on the adsorption process. We have extended this work by obtaining quantitative data using an electrochemical technique known as chronocoulometry. Adsorption isotherms, Gibbs energies of adsorption, electrosorption valencies and the orientation of the pyridine molecules on the various gold electrode surfaces have been determined and will be discussed.

Results and Discussion

Pyridine adsorption studies on Au(100) have shown, that, over the potential region -0.8 V to +0.6 V (SCE) three orientations of the pyridine molecules are possible. At a positively charged surface, the pyridine molecules assume a vertical orientation with the nitrogen atom facing the gold surface. A limiting surface concentration of $6 \times 10^{-10} \text{ mol cm}^{-2}$ was determined for this orientation. At a negatively charged surface and at low surface concentrations ($\Gamma < 1 \times 10^{-10} \text{ mol cm}^{-2}$) the pyridine molecules adsorb flat with the aromatic ring oriented parallel to the surface. At intermediate surface coverages ($3 \times 10^{-10} \text{ mol cm}^{-2} > \Gamma > 1 \times 10^{-10} \text{ mol cm}^{-2}$) and for potentials close to zero charge, a third orientation, presumably intermediate between the flat and the vertical orientations, was observed. Evidence for these latter two orientations has come from our film pressure data as well as from an analysis of the potential drop across the inner layer region of the double layer. Reorientation between the intermediate orientation and the vertical orientation is the result of a phase transition.

For pyridine adsorbed onto a Au(110) single crystal electrode surface the surface concentration-potential curves also displayed a region characterized by a well defined plateau. The value of the limiting surface concentration was 6.14×10^{-10} mol cm^{-2} indicating that the pyridine molecules were oriented on the Au(110) surface in the vertical position. From the shift of the potential of zero charge we were able to infer that the nitrogen atom of the pyridine molecule must be facing the gold surface.

Pyridine adsorption onto Au(111) is a very interesting case. Here we see clear evidence for the flat orientation which occurs on a negatively charged electrode surface. The flat orientation is characterized by a limiting surface concentration of 1.4×10^{-10} mol cm^{-2} . Close to the potential of zero charge the pyridine molecules undergo a reorientation and assume the vertical position. This reorientation, like on Au(100), is the consequence of a phase transition. The value of the limiting surface concentration corresponding to the vertical orientation was found to be 6.73×10^{-10} mol cm^{-2} .

For pyridine adsorbed onto a polycrystalline gold electrode surface we will show that pyridine adsorption can best be described in terms of the adsorption onto different single crystal microfacets which make up the polycrystalline surface.

In general, the Gibbs energy of adsorption for all the gold electrodes discussed above has been found to reach maximum values as high as -35 to -38 KJ mol^{-1} . These are quite large values and suggest that the interactions between the various gold surfaces and the pyridine molecules are quite strong. From the electrosorption valencies, whose absolute values are large, one can infer that the pyridine molecules are chemisorbed.

Conclusions

The above results indicate that the orientation and energetics of pyridine adsorption onto gold electrode surfaces is influenced greatly by the crystallographic orientation of the gold surface.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by grants from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Office of Naval Research.

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